2012 ManicTime review

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As 2012 ended, I wanted to take a look back at this year and review my computer usage/consumption in order to reduce time wasting activity. That time should be channeled into more meaningful activities like learning a new language, improving my current skills, practicing piano and more.

The following data has been collected from August 11, 2012 to December 31, 2012. There is about 14 days which do not have any data (application was closed).

The data covers my computer usage with over 966.21h of active usage. During the period for which I collected data, the computer was also powered off for 1686.30h and left unused (away) for approximately 58.04h.

If we account 2 months of 31 days + 2 months of 30 days + 20 days (August) - 14 days without data = 128 days of data. This would average to 7.55h/day of active computer usage. The way it is currently "structured" however is that computer usage during the week is about 4-5h/day while on the week-end, it is about 12h/day.

This sounds a bit high, but there's a reason to this. I'm not ACTIVELY using the computer for all that time. In ManicTime, the computer is considered active if the computer is being used at least once within a 60 minutes time frame. This means I could potentially be using the computer for 1 minute (or less) every hour and it would count as an active usage of 1h. But for the sake of this review, I'll consider myself as a computer addict (which I am) and will count every minute as an active minute.

The following top 10 items accounts for 876.18h out of the 966.21h of active usage of the computer.

Application

Hours

Google Chrome

457.76

Remote Desktop Connection

179.11

League of Legends (TM) Client

72.69

VLC media player

62.9

HexChat

35.81

Free Alarm Clock

15.02

mRemote

14.9

Sublime Text 2

14.56

Windows Explorer

12.13

Torchlight II

11.3

On first sight we can see that I spend a lot of time browsing the web. I do various things on there and since it is the biggest chunk of my time, it is worth looking at what I do exactly on the web. The following table is the top 10 websites I've spent time on.

0.0.1 Web activity

Website

Hours

www.reddit.com

165.53

www.jolteon.net

19.33

www.youtube.com

17.51

docs.google.com

12.79

-confidential-

12.66

www.twitch.tv

9.34

www.google.ca

8.18

en.wikipedia.org

4.92

www.facebook.com

4.81

mail.google.com

4.08

This covers 259.15h out of 457.76h (56.6%) spent in **Chrome**. This means that I have a long-tail (a list of many different websites which I visit for a brief period) of 198.61h. The major time consumer here is www.reddit.com, which accounts for 36.2% of my time browsing. Even though reddit is a news/media website (useful for staying up to date with world events, not sure I do that...), it also contains a lot of content which I would categorize as time wasters: funny pictures, pictures of cats, videos as well as discussions about topics of interests (computer science, software engineer, robotics, electronics, etc.). I spent about 1.3h/day during the 128 days for which I collected data, which I find to be quite a lot.

As for the other sites, here's a couple of notes:
www.jolteon.net: This is a bug tracker I use to track new features/bugs where I work. It serves as a personal system for me to track these issues. I use it frequently to update task statuses as well as enter anything that I may have forgotten to add during the day. I also like to review it frequently to remind myself of what is left to work on (and let my mind figure that out while I sleep)
www.youtube.com: I often get on youtube because of reddit. I enjoy watching documentaries which last

from 30-45 minutes on average.
docs.google.com: I've spent some time writing documents in Google Docs simply because it allowed me to share them with others so they could review my work.
-confidential-: This is a website I use to manage "things" for work. I generally go there every day and it takes me from 5-15 minutes on average.
www.twitch.tv: Watching streamers of Starcraft 2 and LoL for a while.
www.google.ca: Looks like I spend a lot of time searching...
en.wikipedia.org: Whenever I don't know something about a subject of interest, wiki is a good source (generally...)
www.facebook.com: Checking that everyone I know is still alive
mail.google.com: Because I like spam

0.0.2 Back to the apps

If we go back to the applications I use, the next in the list is **Remote Desktop Connection**. I use **Remote Desktop Connection** to connect to my PC at work so that I can do some work from home. As you can see, I have spent almost 1.44h/day working remotely. Considering that I am not a "work at home" employee, I find this to be outrageously high. I would like to see this be as close as possible to 0h/day.

Next is **League of Legends (TM) Client**. I've recently been interested in the game and started to play it on a more regular basis. I would like to keep this at around 1h/day or lower.

I've used **VLC media player** to watch series as well as movie on my PC. Series are 20-45 minutes while movies varies from 1h30 to 3h30. I'd say that about 225h/year looks like an acceptable amount of time spent on this.

I've stopped using MSN to chat with friends. My main communication channel is now through IRC, for which I use the **HexChat** client. I want to spend a maximum of 1h/day on communication though.

I'm not too sure why **Free Alarm Clock** is part of the top 10. I believe this has to do with the note I wrote at the beginning mentioning that ManicTime would consider a program active if there was some movement on the screen in the last 60 minutes. Since **Free Alarm Clock** was set to show up (and take focus) every hour, it is quite possible that it simply appeared from time to time while I was away and "sucked" the time out of whatever was running in the background.

mRemote is another application I used briefly to do remote desktop. Since it doesn't support multiple monitor remoting, I've stopped using it.

Sublime Text 2 is my text editor of choice. I haven't spent a lot of time in it since August mainly because I haven't been doing any coding at all in the past few months.

Windows Explorer Some time spent searching for files on my PC!

I've played through the whole campaign of **Torchlight II**, which was pretty awesome! I'd be really happy to try multiplayer with some willing friends to see what the end content is like (single player end of game content was pretty funny, but playing it alone wasn't very satisfying for me).

0.0.3 Conclusion

The important part of this process, other than reviewing what time was spent on this year, is to decide new objectives going forward. This means deciding what should be cut down, reduced, increased or added. For each application I've already determined what was my goal/limits thus I simply need to make sure I follow them. A monthly review should be sufficient.

0.0.4 Recommendations

- Reduce reddit usage below 1h/day
- Reduce/cut time spend doing remoting for work
- Redistribute free time on learning activities and skills improvement